



U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement

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News Release

ICE DEPORTS CHINESE “SNAKEHEAD” HUMAN SMUGGLER *Man Beat Hostages, Demanded Ransom For Smuggling Fee*

WASHINGTON, D.C. – A Chinese “snakehead” who smuggled illegal aliens into the United States and then held them hostage and beat them until their smuggling fees were paid has been deported by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).

Officers of ICE’s Detention and Removal Operations today escorted Chong Gui Chen to Hong Kong, China, without incident. Chen had been arrested in Hong Kong in 1996 and was extradited to the United States in 1998 to stand trial for his role in a heinous 1993 human smuggling case.

“We will not tolerate the brutal exploitation of human life,” said Victor Cerda, Acting DRO Director. “People like Chen cannot be allowed to resurrect the human slave trade. His arrest, conviction and deportation send a clear signal that ICE will fight human smuggling and trafficking with every legal authority and every resource we have.”

In March 1993, approximately 200 illegal Chinese aliens were smuggled into the United States on board the vessel "Captain David." Upon landing in Hampton, Va., on March 31, 1993, approximately 140 aliens were transported at gunpoint to safe houses in Bridgeport, Conn. The remaining aliens were taken to a safe house in Hampton. After 10 days, when their families had paid the smuggling fee of \$25,000 to \$30,000, most of the aliens had been released.

The aliens whose families had not yet paid the smuggling fee were transferred to Edison, N.J., where they were held for ransom. The guards beat the aliens and forced them to make calls to their families to pay the ransom. After a month, six aliens still had not been released. They were transported to Queens, N.Y., and beaten frequently until their families paid their ransom.

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Chen, who had previous convictions for forgery in Canada and human smuggling in China, was identified as a “snakehead” - a smuggler and enforcer - in the alien smuggling organization. He was indicted, and after his extradition he was convicted in federal court on kidnapping charges and sentenced to 121 months in federal prison. Following his sentence, he was taken into custody by ICE and held in York, Pa., until his removal from the United States.

ICE

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of five integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.